



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**EVENT: Guilty Plea**

**Defendant: Fabino Caneva**

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**MEMBERS OF DRIVER'S LICENSE FRAUD RING PLEAD GUILTY**

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Stephen J. Murphy, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, announced today that two members of a driver's license fraud ring pled guilty to substantive offenses and conspiracy to transport illegal aliens from the East Coast of the United States to Michigan for the sole purpose of their fraudulently obtaining Michigan Driver's Licenses based upon counterfeit foreign identity documents.

Pleading guilty today before U.S. District Judge Victoria A. Roberts were FABIANO CANEVA, age 26, and NELSON DOMINGUES, age 41. Mr. Caneva is a Brazilian national who resided in Cliffside Park, New Jersey at the time of his arrest. Mr. Domingues, of Detroit, Michigan, is also a Brazilian citizen who has been a Lawful Permanent Resident in the United States ("green card" holder) for approximately 19 years.

Both defendant's pled to the following charges contained in the second superseding indictment and face maximum statutory penalties as follows:

- Count 1: Transport of Aliens within the U.S. for Commercial Advantage and Private Financial Gain, Aiding and Abetting – 10 years and / or \$250,000.00 fine.
- Count 2: Conspiracy to Transport Aliens within the U.S. for Commercial Advantage and Private Financial Gain – 10 years and / or \$250,000.00
- Count 3: Conspiracy to Transfer False Identification Documents – 15 years and / or \$250,000.00

- Count 4: Transfer of False Identification Documents – 15 years and / or \$250,000.00
- Count 5: Mail Fraud, Aiding and Abetting – 20 years and / or \$250,000.00
- Count 13: Forfeiture of Property Constituting or Deriving from Proceeds of Crime

In addition, Mr. Caneva also pled guilty to the following counts:

- Count 7: Possession of Five or More False Identification Documents with Intent to Unlawfully Use and Transfer, Aiding and Abetting – 3 years and / or \$250,000.00
- Count 8: Possession of Document Making Implements with Intent to Use in the Production of False Identification Documents, Aiding and Abetting – 15 years and / or \$250,000.00

Mr. Domingues also pled guilty to Count 6: Conspiracy to Smuggle Aliens into the United States – 10 years and / or \$250,000.00.

The facts revealed at today's plea hearing showed that during the period from on or about June 2003, to on or about June 24, 2004, the defendants were involved in an on-going criminal enterprise with other persons whereby illegal aliens, primarily from the East Coast of the United States, would be transported to the State of Michigan for the sole purpose of their fraudulently obtaining a Michigan Driver's License. FABIANO CANEVA, HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA,<sup>1</sup> FABIANO CESILLA,<sup>2</sup> CLEVERSON DE OLIVERIA,<sup>3</sup> and NELSON A. DOMINGUES worked jointly as co-conspirators in this scheme.

They chose the State of Michigan as their preferred destination, since its requirements for obtaining a Driver's License are such that the illegal aliens did not have to prove lawful status in the United States, a social security card, or actual residency in the State of Michigan.

The general nature of the criminal enterprise is as follows:

For a fee, FABIANO CANEVA, HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA, FABIANO CESILLA, CLEVERSON DE OLIVERIA, and NELSON A. DOMINGUES provided illegal aliens (their "customers") with fraudulent identity documents from foreign countries which were then used as predicated documents by each customer when applying for a Michigan Driver's License in the Eastern District of Michigan. These documents included counterfeit driver's licenses, birth certificates, and marriage certificates from Brazil, Equador, Guatemala, Mexico, Urugay, and Portugal.

FABIANO CANEVA, HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA, FABIANO CESILLA, CLEVERSON DE

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<sup>1</sup> Hugo De Souza Faria has already pled guilty pursuant to a plea agreement with the government.

<sup>2</sup> Fabiano Cesilla's plea hearing was rescheduled from today to August 25, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Cleverson De Oliveria remains a fugitive.

OLIVERIA, and NELSON DOMINGUES would transport, and assist each other in transporting their customers from the East Coast to Michigan. Once in Michigan, the defendants and their customers would stay for several days, pending application for a driver's license at a local Michigan Secretary of State Office in the Eastern District of Michigan.

FABIANO CANEVA, HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA, FABIANO CESILLA, CLEVERSON DE OLIVERIA, and NELSON DOMINGUES provided their customers with residential addresses in the Eastern District of Michigan to use on their driver's license applications. As a result of the customers' applications, officially issued Michigan Driver's Licenses were mailed to addresses in the Eastern District of Michigan over which FABIANO CANEVA, HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA, FABIANO CESILLA, CLEVERSON DE OLIVERIA, and NELSON DOMINGUES had dominion and control. Often times, tens of licenses would be sent to the same address. Once the licenses arrived, members of the conspiracy would bring them back to their customers who had returned to the East Coast of the United States.

CANEVA began his involvement in the above-described conduct in approximately June 2003. At that time CLEVERSON DE OLIVERIA was in charge. DE OLIVERIA basically "owned" the "business". CANEVA and HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA worked as drivers for DE OLIVERIA, transporting illegal alien customers to the Eastern District of Michigan where they would fraudulently obtain their Michigan Driver's License. Often, the predicated documents submitted with the license application were counterfeit foreign identity documents that were provided by FABIANO CESILLA who utilized his computer skills to make the fraudulent documents.

On or about January 2004, CLEVERSON DE OLIVERIA sold the criminal enterprise, or "business", to FABIANO CANEVA and HUGO DE SOUZA FARIA. Defendant CANEVA managed the illicit proceeds from the operation and kept detailed records.. CANEVA and DE SOUZA FARIA continued driving customers to Michigan where they personally assisted the customers in completing an application for a Michigan Driver's Licenses. FABIANO CESILLA continued to provide counterfeit foreign identity documents to CANEVA and FARIA, which he would manufacture on various computers. DOMINGUES continued providing addresses for "customers" to use in the scheme. At times, DOMINGUES also provided a physical location for the manufacturing of the counterfeit foreign identity documents that were used as predicated documents to obtain the Michigan Driver's Licenses.

During the course of the conspiracy, CANEVA, DOMINGUES, AND FARIA agreed to begin smuggling persons from South America, through Mexico, and into the United States. Once in the United States, CANEVA, DOMINGUES, and FARIA planned to bring their "customers" to Michigan to obtain a driver's license. In essence, they sought to provide illegal aliens "one-stop shopping" for being smuggled into the United States and unlawfully obtaining a driver's license once here. DOMINGUES traveled to Mexico to make arrangements to expand the business in this manner.

Sentencing of Mr. Caneva and Mr. Domingues is scheduled for December 4, 2005, before the Honorable Victoria A. Roberts. The sentence to be imposed will be in accord with relevant statutory factors, the Sentencing Guidelines, and the criminal history, if any, of the defendants.

In addition, both defendants face removal to Brazil by the Bureau of Immigration and

Customs Enforcement after serving their sentence.

United States Attorney Murphy commended the outstanding cooperation and teamwork in Southeast Michigan and Newark, NJ among the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the United States Postal Inspection Service. “Without their dedication and commitment, these defendants would never have been brought to justice”, said Murphy. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Freeman.